

Permanent Indus Commission

March 25, 2021

In news : Recently, Indian and Pakistani delegations began the 116th Meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission

Key updates

- The Permanent Indus Commission's meeting is being held after a gap of more than two and half years. The last meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission was held in Lahore on August 29, 2018
- Last year's meeting scheduled to be held in March in New Delhi was cancelled in view of the Coronavirus pandemic
- The current meeting coincided with the National Day of Pakistan which marks the March 23, 1940 Lahore Resolution which paved the way for the creation of Pakistan.
- The positive backdrop of the talks between the two delegations has indicated that the interaction is likely supported by the reported back channel talks that are taking place between India and Pakistan.

About the Permanent Indus Commission

- The Commission deals with water rights on the Indus river.
- The Permanent Indus Commission was set up under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.
- The Indus water treaty warrants the two commissioners to meet at least once a year.
- The Indus Waters Treaty was signed between then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and former Pakistan President Ayub Khan.
- It sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers.

Key issues discussed

- On the first day of the meeting, discussions on Pakistan's objections to the Indian projects were held
- India is building the 1,000 MW Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project on river Marusudar, a tributary of the Chenab.
- The project is located in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The second project, Lower Kalnai, is being developed on the Chenab river.
- The Pakistan side expressed its concern regarding these projects

Indus Waters Treaty

- It was signed between India and Pakistan and **brokered by the World Bank**
- The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
- As per the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, **all the waters of the Eastern Rivers** (Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi), amounting to around 33 million acre feet (MAF) annually, is **allocated to India** for unrestricted use and **the waters of the Western rivers** (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) amounting to around 135 MAF annually largely **to Pakistan**.
- Under the treaty, **India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through run-of-the-river** projects on the western rivers, subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
- It also gives the **right to Pakistan to raise concerns on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects** on western rivers.
- The Treaty also provides an arbitration mechanism to solve disputes amicably.
- **A Permanent Indus Commission was set up** as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty. The

Commission solves disputes arising over water sharing.

- It also makes it mandatory for both countries to appoint water commissioners